

NURSING AND THE WAR.

Miss A. Maud Fletcher, an English nurse, who has returned from Ghent, makes an appeal (from Guy's Hospital) for an X-ray apparatus to take back with her to Belgium. For the past two and a-half years she has been attached to a private hospital in Ghent, which at the outbreak of the war was offered to the Belgian Government, and has since been working in conjunction with the Red Cross Society of Belgium. The hospital is splendidly fitted up and entirely modern, but lacks an X-ray apparatus. No hospital for the wounded can be considered complete without it.

The *Medical Press and Circular* calls attention to the fact that nurses who volunteer for active service under the British Red Cross Society must provide their own outfit at an expenditure of from £6 to £8, and adds: "As a general rule, it may be assumed that the average trained nurse is not able to find £6 or £8 at short notice. If the Red Cross, or any other organisation, wish to maintain an adequate supply of trained and trustworthy nurses at the seat of War, they will have to treat their nurses on a financial basis that compares favourably with what would be earned at home. In Calais, we believe, there is a lack of skilled nursing, and it is certain that in some of the Belgian hospitals there is not only inadequacy in point of numbers, but also as regards proper nursing qualification. Under these circumstances, the British Red Cross might have availed itself of the services of some of the long array of fully-trained nurses which, we gather from various sources, is on its waiting list. Indeed, it may be doubted whether the Society has made the most of the proffered services either of medical or of nursing volunteers."

The same paper also calls attention, as we have done on several occasions, to the fact that the members of the Territorial Force Nursing Service have also to disburse a considerable sum for their uniform, and have to wait some time for repayment. It adds: "The nation has poured out money like water for War purposes, and there can be no excuse for paltry economy in the case of military nurses, who have come forward in a time of national crisis to undertake work which is beset with discomforts, hardships and risks of various kinds." The Matron-in-Chief of this Service is scheduled to receive a munificent salary and allowances amounting to close on £500 a year; there is, therefore, no reason for any further delay in treating the nursing staff with equal generosity.

We are glad to find that the *South African Nursing Record* is in sympathy with our views on the shameless manner in which "Society" is masquerading in trained nurses' uniform:—
"The nurse's uniform has been subjected to all forms of degradation, and the nursing profession has been made alternately the laughing stock of

the world and the butt of its wickedest insults. But perhaps no form of abuse has galled [so much and no behaviour has shown so clearly the light opinion that is held of an honourable calling as the inconsiderate action of certain members of society in the present war. These ladies, undoubtedly with the best intentions in the world, have organised nursing contingents and hospitals. So far so good, but they have proceeded to spoil the effect by themselves donning a nurse's uniform and instituting themselves matron or superintendent of their own contingents. They are photographed in becoming uniforms; they even drive in the streets in their motor cars similarly clad, and their pictures on yachts, &c., form a complete photographic record of their movements from London to the Front and back again. Now this is a line of conduct for which the properly qualified nurse can feel nothing but annoyance. It is a form of abuse just as virulent as any that has found its way into the police courts. As we have said, we are willing to credit these ladies with the best intentions in the world, and the fact that they are willing to give their money and their time to the noble cause of caring for the sick and wounded is itself a testimonial to their high-mindedness. But amateur nursing cannot too strongly be discouraged, even amongst the titled ones of the land. The nurse's uniform should be a mark of her bona fides and efficiency, and should not be subjected to abuse by anyone, however great. If these ladies would be content quietly to use their influence and their money to equip the field hospitals, &c., we think it would show a much nicer spirit. They should leave the management and working of them to those whose training qualifies them to undertake the work."

Mr. R. W. Smith, who left for Havre with his motor kitchen on December 5th, is finding useful work to do in supplying refreshments to the troops, especially to men waiting at the station to entrain. The Joint Commissioner of the St. John and Red Cross Societies considered it the most useful purpose to which to put the car as the hospital trains are now provided with their own kitchens. The refreshments are not given free, but supplied as nearly as possible at cost price, and Mr. Smith, with Miss Workman and Miss Higgins, who are helping him, have decided to give any small profit which may be made to the funds of the St. John Ambulance Association and the British Red Cross Society.

Through the *American Journal of Nursing* we learn where the Red Cross units, sent over from the United States, have been stationed. We reported the send-off of Miss Scott Hay to Russia, since when she has disappeared in that vast continent. The English units we also reported as working at the American Women's Hospital, Paignton, and at the Royal Hospital, Haslar; the French units went to Pau, to nurse 800 severely wounded German prisoners, with the

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